image
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JUNE
$2.95
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CANADA
DESPERATE TIMES
BY CHRIS ELIOPOULOS
HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA BRINGING IN THIS BACKDROP?!
YOU WANT THIS BOOK TO SELL, DON'T YOU?!
ELIOPOULOS '98

DESPERATE TIMES

BY CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

DESPERATE TIMES PINUP
INKS BY TERRY AUSTIN

HOW TO PICK UP CHICKS
BY ERIK LARSEN

FOR IMAGE COMICS

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DEDICATED TO MY WIFE, AUDRA.
BECAUSE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO.
(AND IF I DIDN'T, YOU DON'T GET
ANY, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!)

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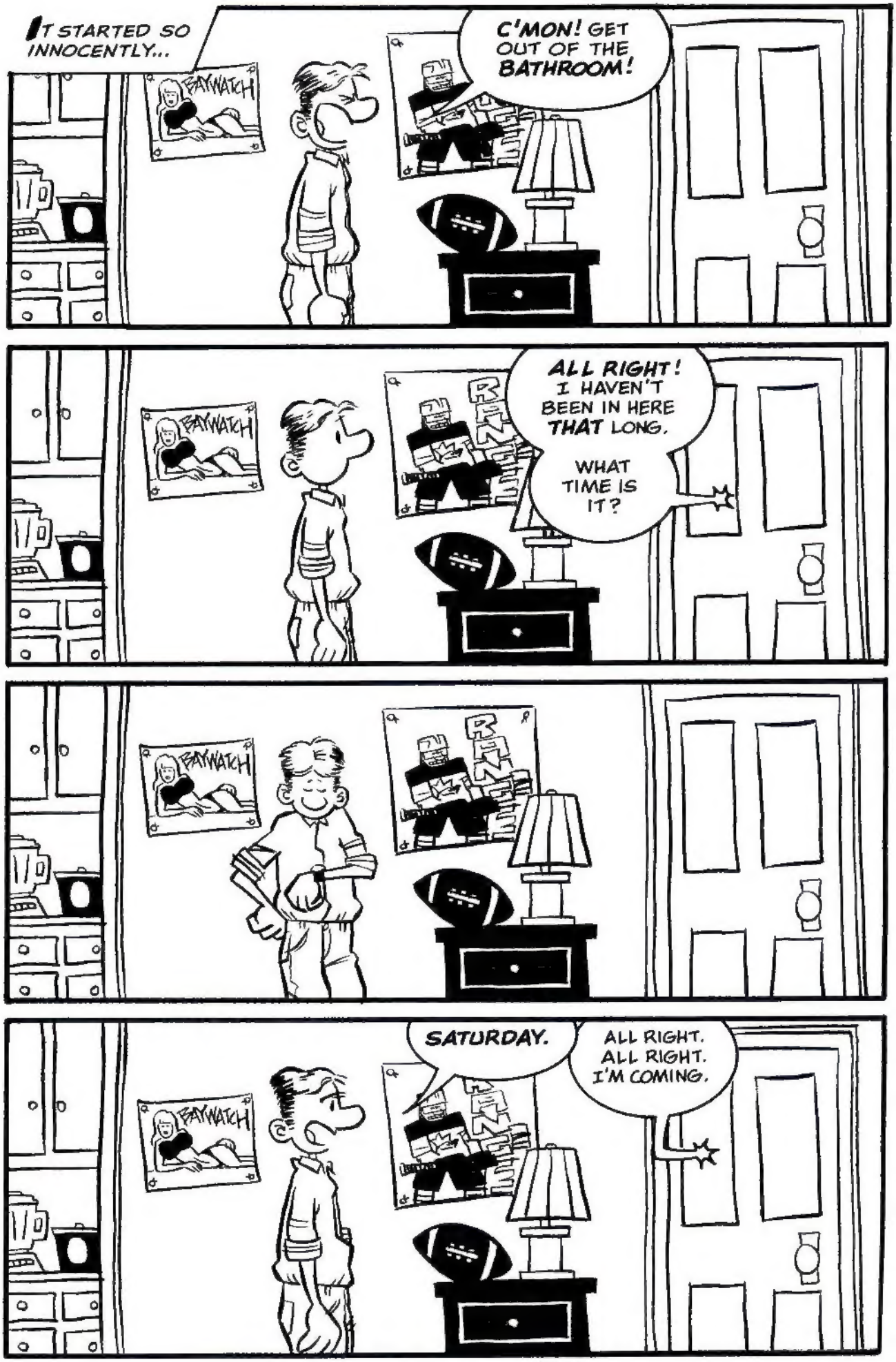
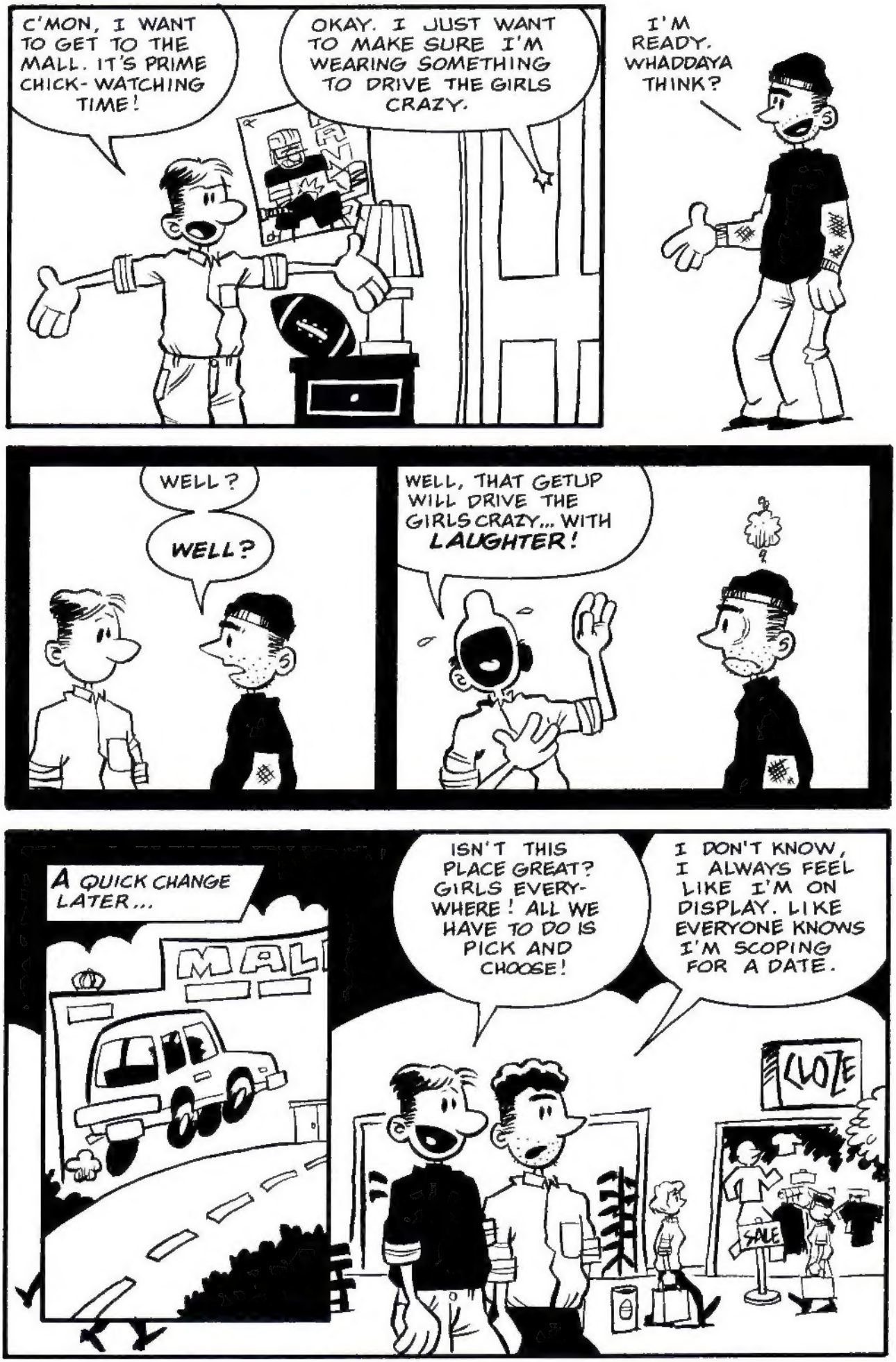
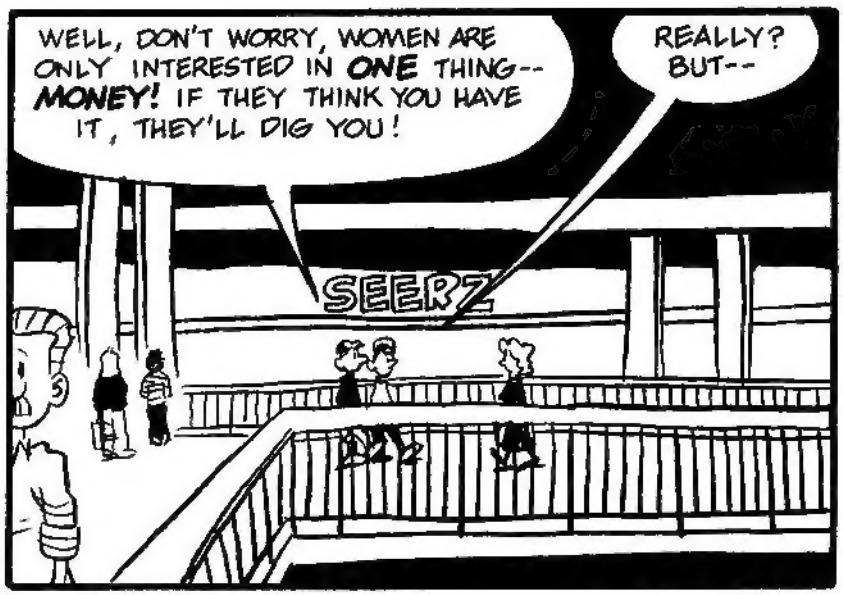
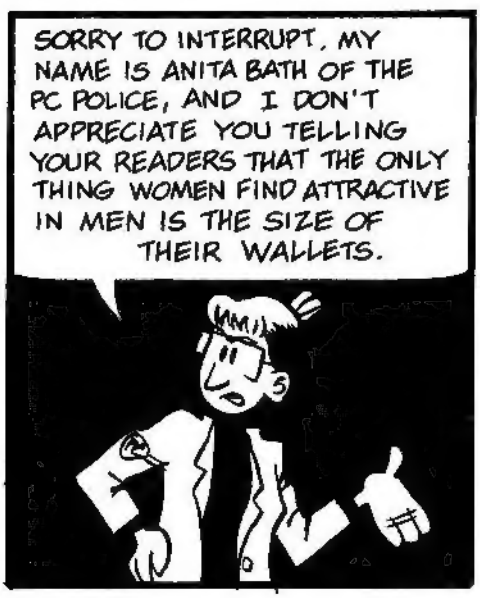

IT STARTED SO INNOCENTLY...
BAYWATCH
C'MON! GET OUT OF THE BATHROOM!
BAYWATCH
RANGE
ALL RIGHT! I HAVEN'T BEEN IN HERE THAT LONG.
WHAT TIME IS IT?
BAYWATCH
RANGE
BAYWATCH
RANGE
SATURDAY.
ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT. I'M COMING.


C'MON, I WANT TO GET TO THE MALL. IT'S PRIME CHICK-WATCHING TIME!
OKAY. I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE I'M WEARING SOMETHING TO DRIVE THE GIRLS CRAZY.
I'M READY. WHADDAYA THINK?
WELL?
WELL?
WELL, THAT GETUP WILL DRIVE THE GIRLS CRAZY... WITH LAUGHTER!
A QUICK CHANGE LATER...
MALL
ISN'T THIS PLACE GREAT? GIRLS EVERY-WHERE! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS PICK AND CHOOSE!
I DON'T KNOW, I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE I'M ON DISPLAY. LIKE EVERYONE KNOWS I'M SCOPING FOR A DATE.
CLOTE
SALE


WELL, DON'T WORRY, WOMEN ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN ONE THING-- MONEY! IF THEY THINK YOU HAVE IT, THEY'LL DIG YOU!
REALLY? BUT--
SEERZ

EXCUSE ME! EXCUSE ME!
WHO ARE YOU?! WE'RE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A STORY! WHAT DO YOU WANT?


SORRY TO INTERRUPT, MY NAME IS ANITA BATH OF THE PC POLICE, AND I DON'T APPRECIATE YOU TELLING YOUR READERS THAT THE ONLY THING WOMEN FIND ATTRACTIVE IN MEN IS THE SIZE OF THEIR WALLETS.

OH, SORRY. WOMEN ALSO LIKE A NICE BUTT.

WELL, YEAH, A NICE BUTT IS DEFINITELY A-- HEY! CUT THAT OUT!

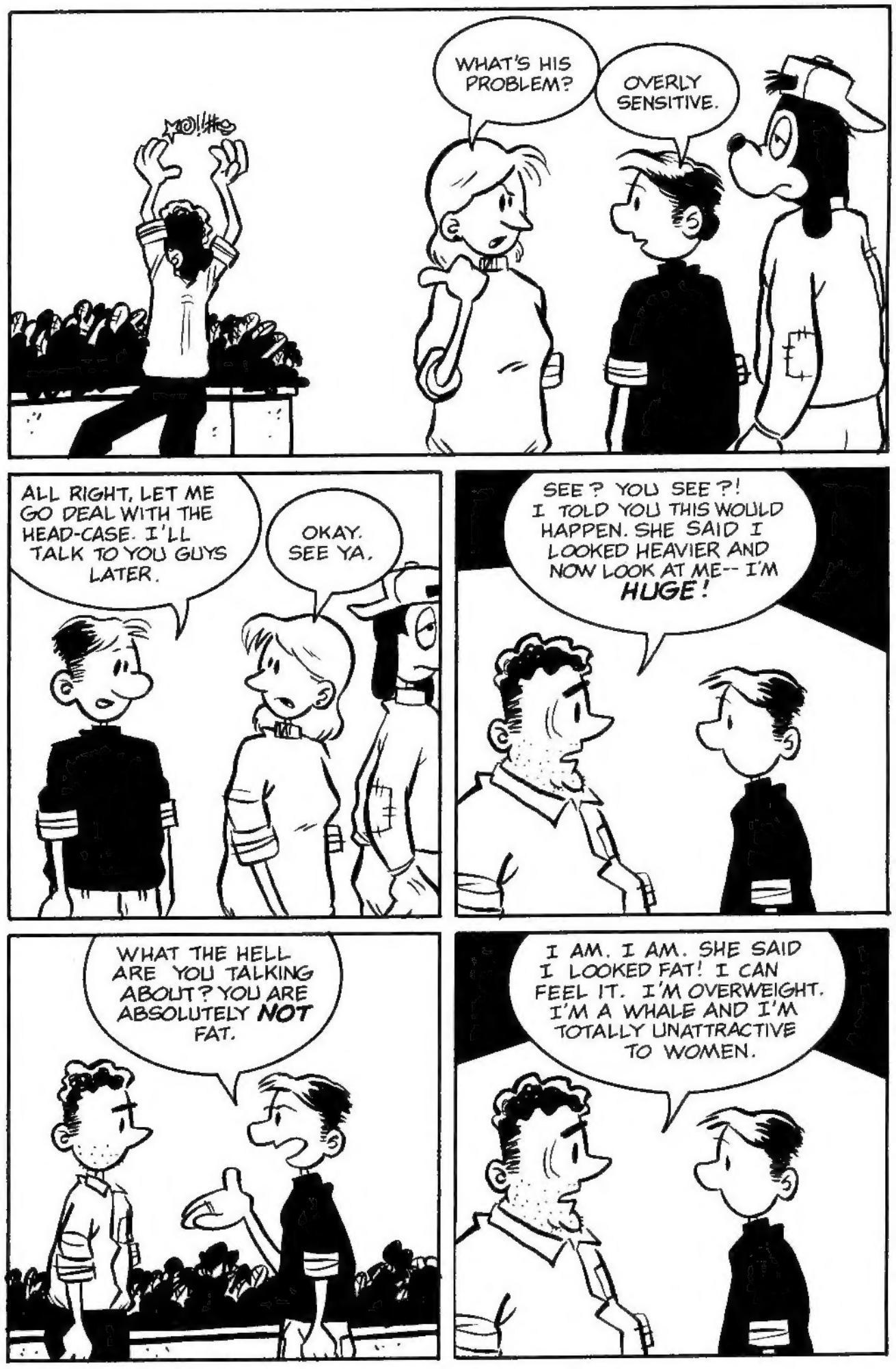
MEN ARE MUCH MORE SHALLOW THAN WOMEN. YOU ALL ONLY CARE ABOUT ONE THING.
OH, PLEASE. I DON'T THINK SO.

HEY! IS THAT A NEW HOOTERS™ OPENING UP DOWN THERE?
WHERE?! WHERE?!

EXCUSE ME, BUT CAN WE GET BACK TO THE STORY?
UM... SURE, SORRY.
UH... OKAY. WHERE WERE WE? OH, YEAH! LOOK OVER THERE, IT'S MY SISTER AND HER FIANCÉE. GUESS WE HAVE TO SAY HELLO.
OH, NO. EVERY TIME I SEE HER SHE SAYS SOMETHING THAT SOUNDS LIKE A COMPLIMENT, BUT IS REALLY A PUT-DOWN.
OH, PLEASE. THAT'S JUST IN YOUR MIND. SHE DOES NOT DO THAT.
YES, SHE DOES. AND EVERY TIME SHE SAYS SOMETHING, I FEEL SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT IT ALL DAY. I'M A TOTAL MESS.
OH, COME ON. BE A MAN. SHE WON'T SAY ANYTHING. YOU'LL SEE.
HEY, TOAD. YOU LOOK GOOD. DID YOU PUT ON A LOT OF WEIGHT?

FWUMP
CRAP.

OH, GOD! I'M FAT! I'M FAT!! I'M NEVER GONNA STOP HEARING ALL THOSE AWFUL FAT JOKES!
I CAN HEAR IT ALL NOW -- "WHEN TOAD SITS AROUND THE HOUSE, HE SITS AROUND THE HOUSE."
"WOW, TOAD'S SO FAT, SMALLER FAT PEOPLE ARE IN ORBIT AROUND HIM."
AND NOW I'LL HAVE TO GO OUT TO DINNER AND ALWAYS ORDER A SALAD SO NO ONE THINKS I'M A PIG!
THEN I'M GONNA GET SO BIG, I'LL LIVE IN MY BED AND WHEN I GET SICK THEY'LL HAVE TO RIP OPEN THE HOUSE AND CARRY ME OUT WITH A FORKLIFT, TURNING ME INTO A MEDIA CIRCUS. THEN ALL THE NEWS SHOWS WILL TALK ABOUT ME IN THEIR "STRANGE OCCURANCES" SEGMENT AND THEN THEY'LL BURY ME IN A PIANO BOX!
OH, THE HORROR!


WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?
OVERLY SENSITIVE.
ALL RIGHT, LET ME GO DEAL WITH THE HEAD-CASE. I'LL TALK TO YOU GUYS LATER.
OKAY. SEE YA.
SEE? YOU SEE?! I TOLD YOU THIS WOULD HAPPEN. SHE SAID I LOOKED HEAVIER AND NOW LOOK AT ME-- I'M HUGE!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY NOT FAT.
I AM. I AM. SHE SAID I LOOKED FAT! I CAN FEEL IT. I'M OVERWEIGHT. I'M A WHALE AND I'M TOTALLY UNATTRACTIVE TO WOMEN.

YOU JUST THINK YOU'RE FAT. IT'S JUST THAT YOU SEE YOURSELF AS FAT.
EVERYONE HAS A DIFFERENT SELF-IMAGE. BECAUSE SHE SAID YOU GAINED WEIGHT, YOU SEE YOURSELF AS FAT.
SO, JUST BECAUSE I FEEL A CERTAIN WAY, I APPEAR THAT WAY TO MYSELF.
RIGHT. NO ONE ELSE SEES YOU THAT WAY.
SO DOES THAT MEAN YOU SEE YOURSELF WITH A REALLY BIG NOSE?
SCREW YOU.

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'M SORRY. I WAS JUST KIDDING! PLEASE, I REALLY NEED YOUR HELP.
I NEED TO LOSE WEIGHT. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I KNOW A QUICK WAY YOU COULD LOSE TEN POUNDS OF UNWANTED FAT.
REALLY? WHAT IS IT?
GET A LABOTOMY!
HAR. HAR.
DON'T BE A JERK. IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HELP ME--

OKAY. FIRST OF ALL, YOU'RE NOT FAT, BUT IF YOU WANT TO BE LIKE THOSE LAZY SLOBS WHO WANT AN EASY WAY TO DROP POUNDS, FINE. WHY NOT GET THE FAT VACCUMED OUT.
OOOKAY-- HERE WE GO AGAIN. PEOPLE ARE NOT "LAZY SLOBS" JUST BECAUSE THEY MIGHT HAVE A WEIGHT PROBLEM.
YOU AGAIN?
BEING OVERWEIGHT IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR MANY PEOPLE. SOME OF THOSE FOLKS NEED A LITTLE "NIP AND TUCK" TO HELP THEM FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES.
WHAT IS THIS-- OPRAH?
LOOK, RICHARD SIMMONS, THE ONLY REASON THE PORKERS ARE GETTING LIPOSUCTION IS BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO DO WHAT IT TAKES TO LOSE WEIGHT-- DIET AND EXCERCISE.
THEY PREFER DIETETICALLY CHALLENGED, AND SOME HAVE MEDICAL PROBLEMS OR GENETICS WHICH MAKE THEM LARGER AND MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO LOSE THE WEIGHT.
THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT? YOU GOT IT DONE!! YOU GOT THE FAT HOOVERED OUT OF YOU, DIDN'T YOU?

NEVERMIND. I'M LEAVING.
ALL RIGHT. LET'S GO TO THE BOOKSTORE AND SEE WHAT KIND OF BOOKS THEY HAVE ON WEIGHT LOSS.
SOON, AT THE BOOKSTORE...
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? THE NUTRITION SECTION IS OVER THERE.
I KNOW...
... I'M CHECKING OUT THE "IDIOT'S GUIDE" SECTION. THEY HAVE "THE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO--" EVERYTHING. HELP ME LOOK.
IDIOT'S GUIDES
FICTION
NON FICTION

" THE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO BRAIN SURGERY ?"
OKAY. HERE IT IS. THE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO LOSING WEIGHT.
WHAT'S IT SAY?
DIET AND EXCERCISE.
BE SERIOUS-- WHAT DOES IT REALLY SAY?
IT SAYS TO WATCH YOUR DIET. YOU CAN EITHER CUT OUT THE FATS OR CUT OUT THE CARBS

WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MEAN?
OKAY. LET ME EXPLAIN IT IN TERMS YOU MIGHT UNDERSTAND. YOU KNOW WHEN YOU GO TO McDONALD'S AND ORDER A HAMBURGER?
YEP.
WELL, WITH THESE DIETS YOU EITHER HAVE TO HOLD THE BURGER OR HOLD THE BUN.
YOU'RE ALSO NOT SUPPOSED TO DRINK SODAS OR ANY ALCOHOL. SOUNDS EASY ENOUGH.
I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T THINK I CAN DIET ON MY OWN. WILL YOU DO IT WITH ME?
NO BEER? ARE YOU KIDDING? NO WAY!

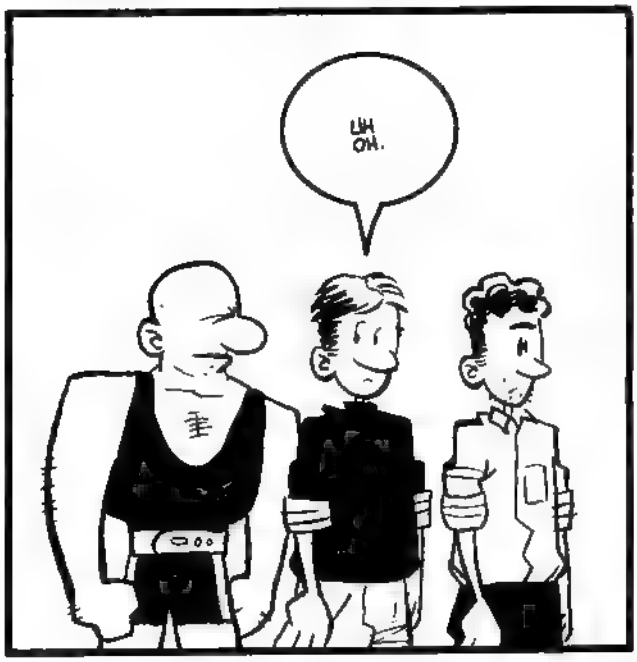
ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT. I'LL DO IT ON MY OWN. NOW COMES THE EXERCISE, RIGHT?
FICT
RIGHT. WE'LL GO TO THE GYM. BUT I'M WARNING YOU, YOU WON'T LIKE IT.
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
BECAUSE, THE LAST TIME I WENT TO THE GYM IT WAS FILLED WITH A BUNCH OF MUSCLE-HEADS WHO LOOK DOWN ON YOU IF YOU CAN'T LIFT MORE THAN FIFTY POUNDS.
YOU CAN'T LIFT MORE THAN FIFTY POUNDS?
I... UH... I DIDN'T SAY THAT. UM... I JUST SAID THEY PICKED ON -- UH, NEVERMIND.

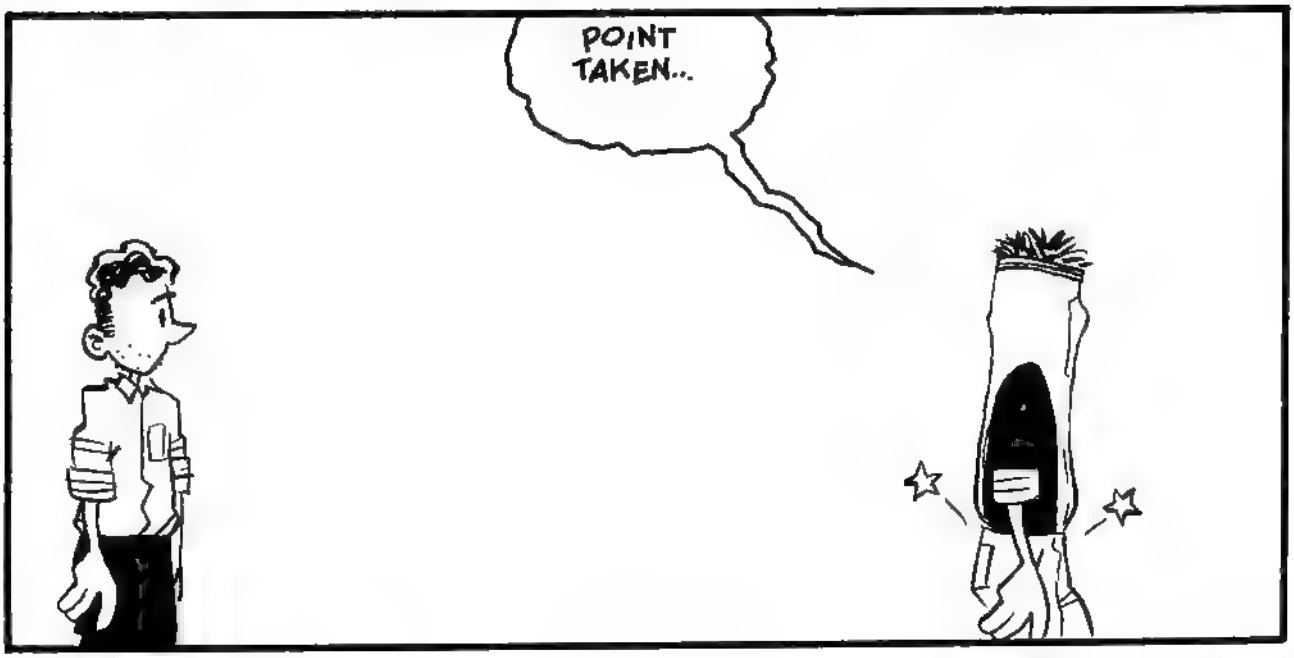
LOOK AT THIS! STUCK BEHIND ANOTHER BAD DRIVER! AND JUST LOOK AT THE BUMPER STICKER ON THE CAR-- "JESUS SAVES". WHY DOES IT SEEM THAT THE MORE RELIGIOUS A PERSON IS, THE WORSE A DRIVER THEY ARE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
JUST LOOK AT IT. THE WORST DRIVERS ON THE ROAD ARE HASSIDIC JEWS.
A CLOSE SECOND IS ANYONE WITH A JESUS BUMPER STICKER OR HAVE A PLASTIC MARY ON THE DASHBOARD.
AND THEN THERE'S THE AMISH... MAN, THEY ALWAYS DRIVE SO DAMN SLOW!!
MARTY, THEY DRIVE SLOW BECAUSE THEY ONLY DRIVE HORSE AND BUGGYS.
HMM.
WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

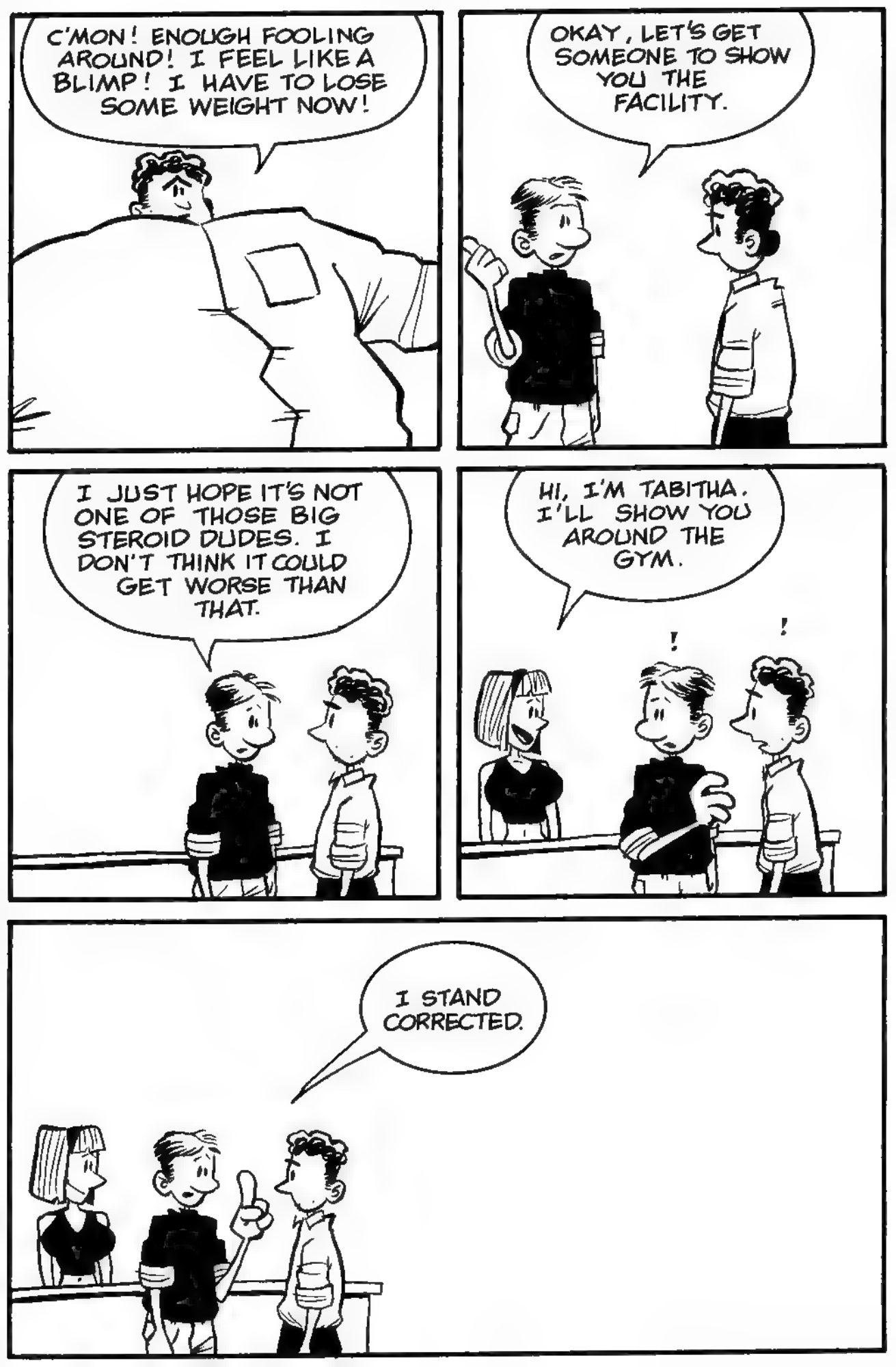
Y'KNOW, YOU BETTER WATCH WHAT YOU SAY. ONE OF THESE DAYS SOMEONE'S GONNA REALLY GET PISSED OFF AT YOU!

WHATEVER.
MYG

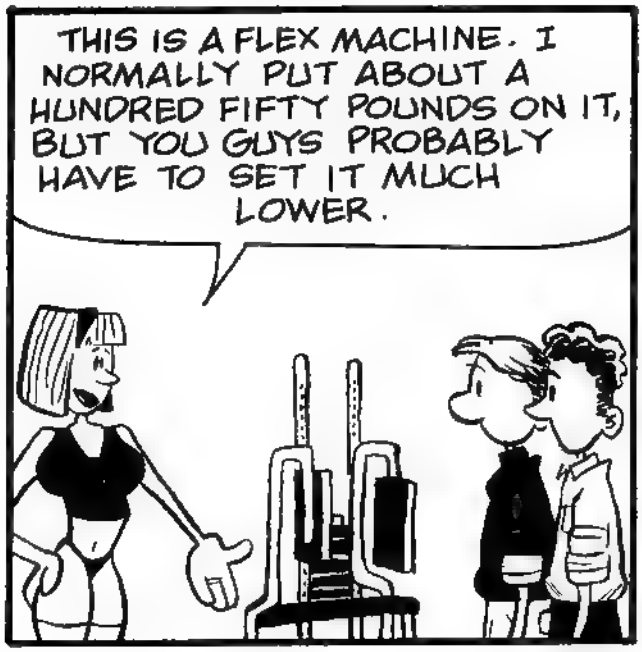
SEE, I TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS PLACE. DON'T THESE GUYS REALIZE THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH THEY WORK OUT THEY'LL STILL BE SHORT OR BALD.

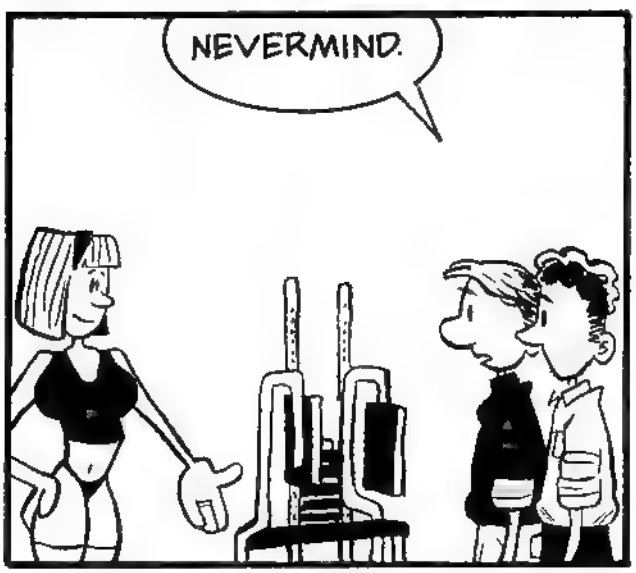

UH OH.


POINT TAKEN...


C'MON! ENOUGH FOOLING AROUND! I FEEL LIKE A BLIMP! I HAVE TO LOSE SOME WEIGHT NOW!
OKAY, LET'S GET SOMEONE TO SHOW YOU THE FACILITY.
I JUST HOPE IT'S NOT ONE OF THOSE BIG STEROID DUDES. I DON'T THINK IT COULD GET WORSE THAN THAT.
HI, I'M TABITHA. I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND THE GYM.
!
!
I STAND CORRECTED.

WHAT? WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT A GORGEOUS WOMAN SHOWING US AROUND A GYM?


THIS IS A FLEX MACHINE. I NORMALLY PUT ABOUT A HUNDRED FIFTY POUNDS ON IT, BUT YOU GUYS PROBABLY HAVE TO SET IT MUCH LOWER.


NEVERMIND.

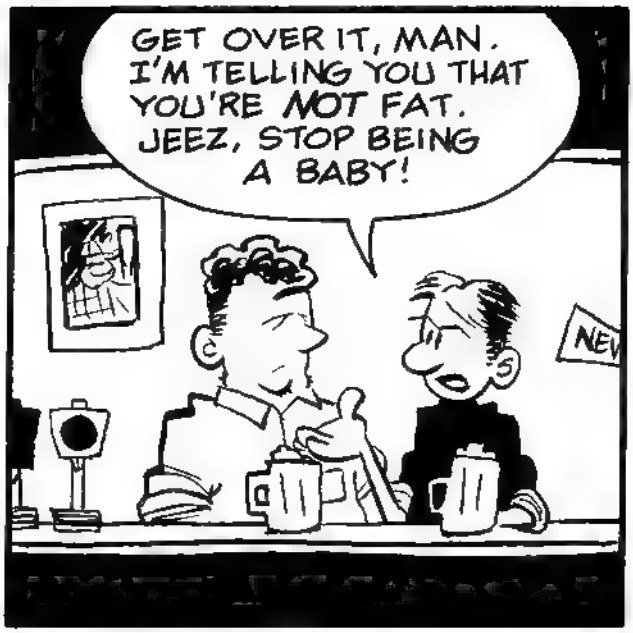
THANK YOU FOR SHOWING US THE GYM. WE'LL BE GOING NOW.

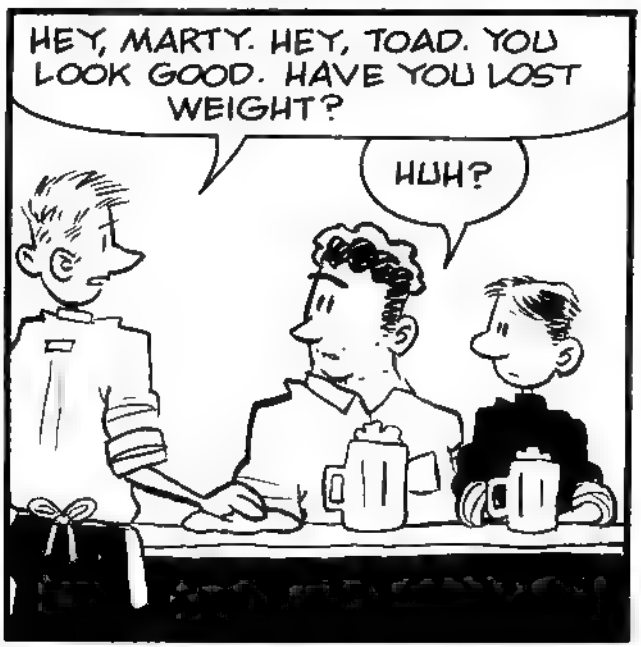
TELL YOU WHAT. IT'S GETTING LATE. WHY DON'T WE GO TO THE SALOON FOR A BEER?

OKAY, BUT THIS TIME LET'S MAKE IT A *LIGHT* BEER.

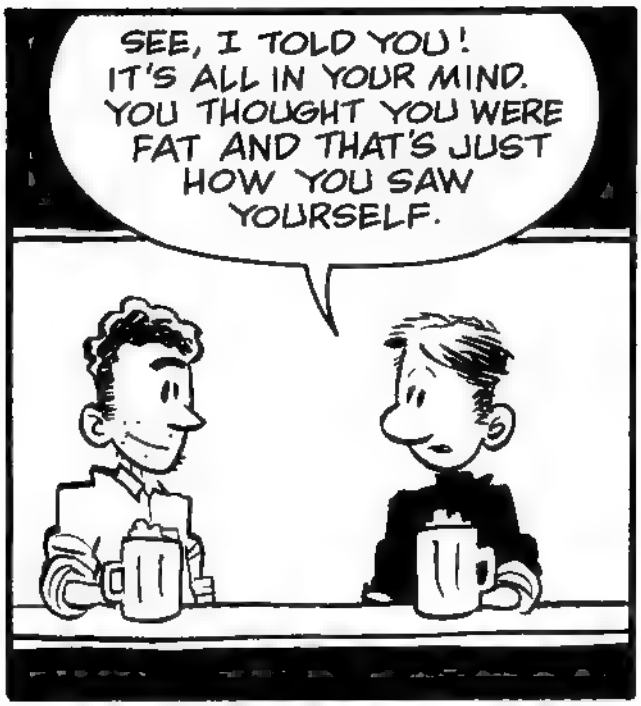
SALO

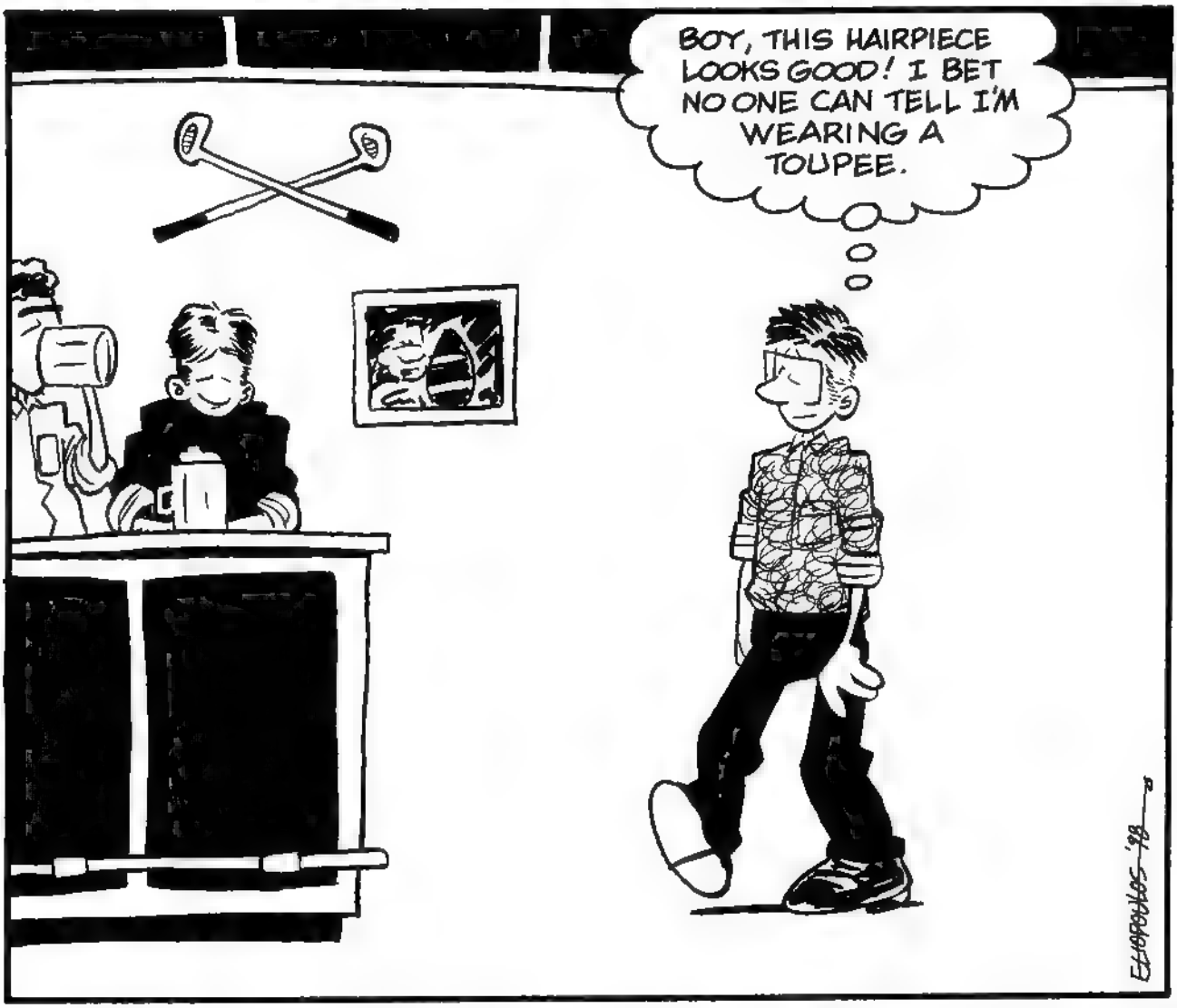
SIGH


GET OVER IT, MAN. I'M TELLING YOU THAT YOU'RE NOT FAT. JEEZ, STOP BEING A BABY!

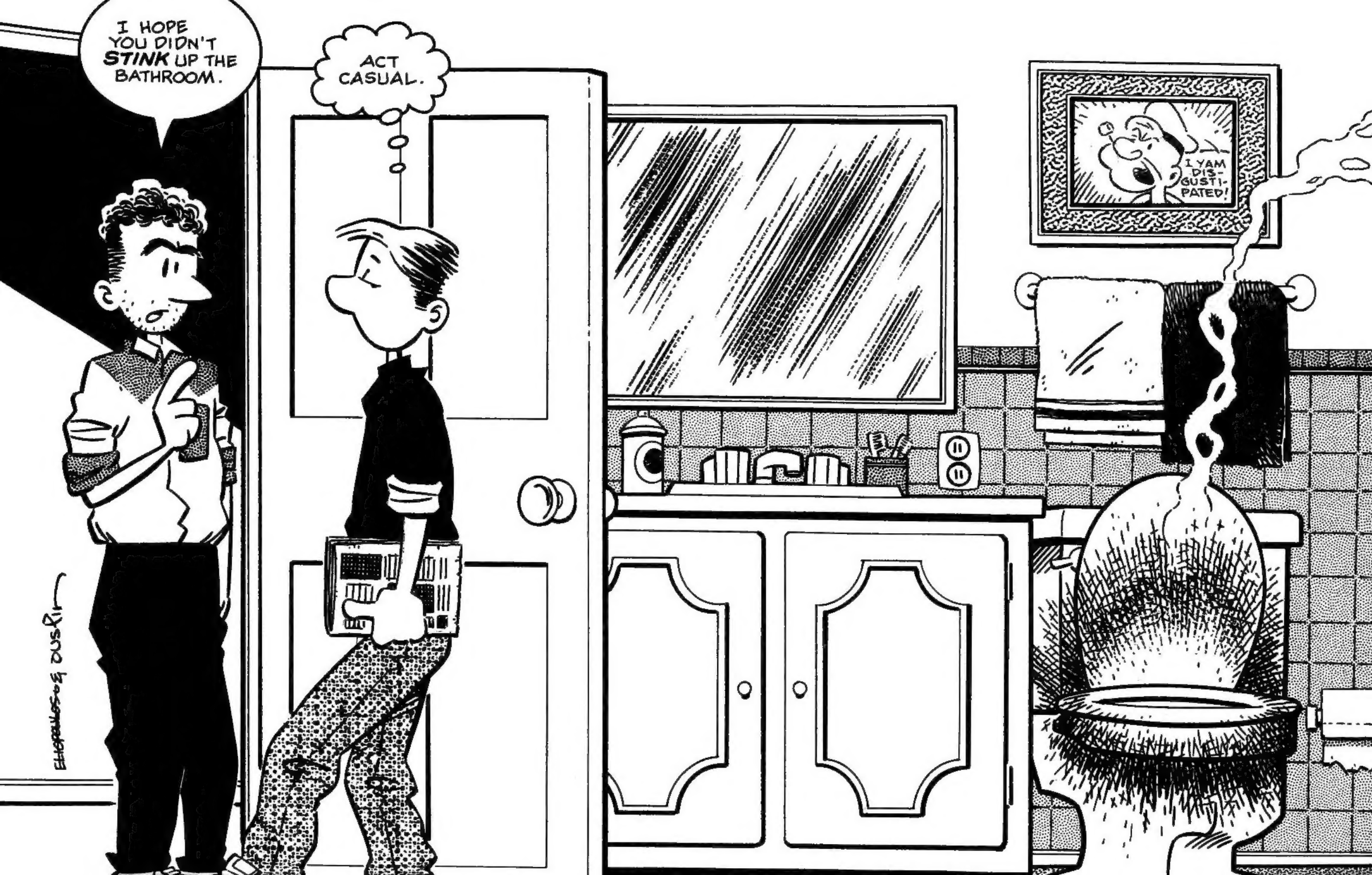

HEY, MARTY. HEY, TOAD. YOU LOOK GOOD. HAVE YOU LOST WEIGHT?
HUH?

WOW! I FEEL BETTER ALREADY! I'M NOT OVERWEIGHT!
POP





NEXT: THE STRIP JOINT


I HOPE YOU DIDN'T STINK UP THE BATHROOM.
ACT CASUAL.
I YAM DIS-GUSTI-PATED!
ELHOPELESS & DUSRIN

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MY VIETNAM

This is what the "real" Toad looks like. The photo was taken something like eight years ago. Actually, this is my friend Jody Gross. Although the character looks like him, it's really nothing like him. In reality Jody reminds me of Woody Allen without the picking up of young girls. He's the funniest guy I know and every time I talk to him I laugh my ass off.

His relationship with my sister is sort of like the one in this strip. She treats him like a little kid, asking him to do Kermit the Frog imitations and he secretly wanting to strangle her.

I met Jody in college. We went to the Fashion Institute of Technology. We met on the first day of school--two suburban kids thrown into the deep end of the pool in New York. Actually Jody says he met me first. Here's the story:

F.I.T. is a state school and they required everyone to take evaluation tests to check your math and english skills. He was sitting behind and to the side of me when near the end of the test I threw up my hands, shrugged as I realized I couldn't do much better on the test and walked out. Jody says that he knew we were going to be friends after that--we were kindred spirits. Later that day we got assigned lockers since we commuted to school from our homes and he introduced himself. "Hi, my name is Joe. My friends call me Joe." I introduced myself and we began talking about nothing special when he just blurted out, "Okay! My name's really Jody, but all the kids in High School always made fun of my name because it's a girl's name--I wanted to change my image." I looked at him as he revealed his little secret and realized we were going to be friends after that--we were kindred spirits.

Over the next couple of years we changed. We were like raw recruits getting shipped off to war. After some time we became vicious and sarcastic. students hated us and teachers feared us--we DID what we wanted and SAID what we wanted.

The schedule we had was unrelenting. We had classes scheduled from nine to five every day and had a total of three hours a day of commute time. Besides the art classes in our major, the school required Math, Science, English and other Liberal Arts courses in order to get a degree. Each teacher thought theirs was the only class giving homework which required us to stay up until all hours of the morning doing homework. (This kind of pressure definitely prepared me to work for the editors in the comic book field.) We would show up for classes clutching either a cup of coffee or, in my case, a can of Coke. With asses dragging and dark circles around our eyes we tried to keep up, but nerves got frayed. The only thing keeping us going was each other.

It got so bad that we got reputations around the campus. People would leave a room when we entered, but we were so beat down we ignored them. One time I was so exhausted I fell asleep on the Professor's desk before class, he walked in and without skipping a beat began class totally ignoring the basket-case passed out on his work station. I soon woke up and went and sat down without so much as a word. Jody couldn't believe I got away with that, but I was too tired to care one way or another.

"Frustration" would be the word to describe our experiences in college. Besides our academic woes, we were subject to our hormones as well. F.I.T. has a reputation for having the world's most beautiful female students in the world and it's true. Every one of our classes had a woman who could be a model if they wanted. The women at our school were so beautiful that men who worked in that area of the city would buy their lunch, walk to the campus and ogle women for an hour. We are not the best looking fellas in the world, so you can only imagine our success rate.

So, between the schedule and the gorgeous women we weren't getting we bottomed out.

After two years every one in our department had to show their portfolio of work to the entire department staff and be evaluated to see if you're "worthy" to come back for the next two years. We had had enough and it was evident. I wanted to go to a party school maybe in Arizona, Jody wanted to go anywhere else. Our parents pretty much forced us to go back. We went for our portfolio reviews. I walked in the door and announced to the teachers that I had heard they were falling asleep and they better wake up while I was there. Some folks didn't like that too much. We finished and Jody came out to my house for the weekend to just veg after our torture. We stopped on the Palisades in New Jersey overlooking the Hudson River. I asked Jody if he thought we got back in, he sighed and quietly said, "I hope not."

When we got back to school we were told by two teachers that they had to fight to get us back in. None of the other teachers wanted to put up with us and our "nonsense." These two teachers stuck their necks out for us because they said that of all the students, we had the most potential to really break out. We told them we'd try, but frustration kicked in again and it was back to the old ways.

We graduated college and got going with our careers, but we have this strange bond. I've gotten married, he's gotten laid, we've grown and we've mellowed, but we still have this bond. Every time we get together it's like old times and I realize what a great guy Jody is. I mention things that happened during our time at school and Jody never remembers--he says it's like a Vet who blocks out the horrors he's seen in combat. "You know, Chris, F.I.T. was our Vietnam."

Jody gets a little put off by my use of his likeness and fears I'm making fun of him, but in truth I just like having Jody around even if it's just on paper--he keeps me level-headed and makes me laugh. Isn't that what a true friend does?

There are some people I want to thank for being there at different times in my life, and since I may not get this chance again, please indulge me.

My parents, Chris and Sandy.
My sister, Marian.
My inlaws, Jim and Phyllis.
Jim and Ella.
Tracy, Jim, Elizabeth, Alexa, Meggan, Christopher and Jenifer.
My Grandmother Julia.
Ed Mullins.
Dan and Marla Meyers.
Glenn and Laura Herdling.
John and Beth Ann Garvey.
Bill, Bob and Debbie Jenks.
Tony and Kathy Avon.
Scott and Diane Wickersheim.
Ken Lopez.
Jim Novak.
Mike Heisler.
Ron Marz.
Mike Marts.
Buddy Scalera.
A special thanks to Terry Austin.
And an extra special thank you to **Erik Larsen!**
Thanks!
See you in two months!

HOW TO PICK UP CHICKS
WITH MARTY AND TOAD
NOW WE COME TO THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS COMIC...
THAT'S RIGHT-- IT'S THE PART WRITTEN + DRAWN BY ERIK LARSEN.
--THE REASON YOU ALL BOUGHT THE BOOK
HE'S A SWELL GUY.
Y'KNOW-- THAT'S THE WORST LETTERING I'VE EVER SEEN.
PROBABLY WHY HE HAS CHRIS DO IT IN SAVAGE DRAGON.
--COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY "ON MODEL."
JESUS! YOU'RE RIGHT-- THAT LARSEN GUY BLOWS!
AND JUST LOOK AT THESE BACKGROUNDS "PATHETIC" DOESN'T DO THEM JUSTICE.
NO DOUBT HELL HAVE US PLUGGING AQUAMAN, WOLVERINE AND SAVAGE DRAGON PRETTY SOON...
ENOUGH! THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT US PICKING UP CHICKS!
LIKE ERIK HAS A CLUE!
HE MET HIS WIFE 11 YEARS AGO ON A BLIND DATE!
THE ONLY THING HE PICKS UP IS HIS SOCKS OFF THE FLOOR!
I KNEW WE SHOULDA LET CHRIS HANDLE THIS PART.
I'M REALLY DEPRESSED.
HELL, MAYBE GUILT WILL SET IN AND HE'LL AT LEAST FEEL OBLIGATED TO DRAW SOME SKIRTS ON THE NEXT PAGE....

WHOA! CHECK IT OUT-- BABES GALORE!
1
— ALL RIGHT!
Sock!
Wam
POW!
WHOA!!
SUPER BABES AT THAT!
THINK WE CAN PICK THEM UP?
YOU GRAB THE LEGS-- I'LL GET THE ARMS.
COOL!
LET'S HOPE SHE DOESN'T WAKE UP FOR A WHILE.
YEE-HAW!
OH, CRAP!
IT'S THE LAST PANEL OF THE STORY!
I'LL NEVER GET LAID.